GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:544
ANSWERED ON:23.02.2001
UN PANEL NAMED INDIA IN BLOOD DIAMOND TRAIL
SUBODH MOHITE

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) Whether the attention of the Government has been drawn towards the news-item captioned `UN panel names India in blood diamonds` trail` appearing in the Indian Express dated January 22, 2001;

(b) if so, whether an expert panel of United Nations has listed India among the countries which could have an indirect link to the trail of blood diamonds from Sierra Leone;

(c) if so, whether panel has asked India to impose stringent import and invoicing procedures on diamond trade; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN)

(a) Yes, sir.

(b) No, sir.

(c) & (d) The United NationsPanel of Experts under the Chairmanship of Mr. Martin Chungong Ayafor during their visit to India was apprised of the various actions taken by the Government of India and the Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council to ensure that India does not have any dealings in conflict /blood diamonds. The UN Panel in turn had expressed its satisfaction about the actions taken by India. In its report, the Expert Panel has stated that it is essential and urgent that major trading centres, which includes India, come to a common agreement on the recording and public documentation of rough diamond imports which is consistent from one country to another and that clearly designates the country of origin in addition to the country of provenance.

The Government of India are willing to fully cooperate with any reasonable global documentation scheme which does not cause any undue delays and does not create unnecessary hardships to the legitimate trade in diamonds, with a view to eliminate the possibility of any conflict diamonds entering India